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MARCUS DICKERSON CONVICTED IN COCAINE CASE

FRESNO—United States Attorney John K. Vincent announced today that Bakersfield native Marcus Dickerson, age 33, has been found guilty on cocaine charges. On Thursday, a trial held in United States District Court in Fresno concluded with Dickerson's conviction on all charges against him. Dickerson was convicted of conspiring to distribute cocaine and crack cocaine between September 1, 1996 and September 4, 1997; selling crack cocaine on September 23, 1996; possessing cocaine with the intent to distribute on June 15, 1997; and possessing cocaine with the intent to distribute on August 2, 1997. The crimes were all committed in Bakersfield. Dickerson faces twenty years in prison for each count of conviction for a possible eighty year sentence.

Evidence at trial included testimony about a September 23, 1996 undercover purchase of three ounces of crack cocaine from Dickerson. Wiretap recordings of Dickerson arranging cocaine purchases on June 15, 1997 and August 2, 1997 were also introduced in evidence and played before the jury. According to trial testimony, on August 2, 1997 a one kilogram "brick" of cocaine was seized after a foot chase involving defendant Dickerson. The cocaine was analyzed at a criminalistics laboratory and returned to the Kern County Sheriff's Department evidence facility. When investigators attempted to retrieve the cocaine for use at trial, it could not be located. Testimony at trial indicated that the cocaine could have been misplaced, inadvertently destroyed, or stolen and that there is an ongoing investigation of its disappearance.

United States Attorney Vincent said, "The guilty verdict was well supported by all the evidence produced at trial. The jury correctly concluded that the fact the cocaine was missing had no connection to the guilt or innocence of Mr. Dickerson."

An indictment was brought against Dickerson in September 1997 but trial in this case was delayed on numerous occasions. Delays were caused by the death of the first attorney appointed to represent Mr. Dickerson and a heart attack suffered by his second appointed attorney. Dickerson, who had been released on bail since the early stages of the case, was remanded to custody yesterday. Sentencing has been scheduled for December 3, 2001.

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